



42nd Infantry Division NEWS

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Task Force Liberty Prepares to Move Out

FORT DRUM, NEW YORK – Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division are again on the move. Over the past 60 days, the citizen-soldiers of the Army's famous "Rainbow Division" have completed their collective unit training and begun their preparations for movement overseas.

The division headquarters and base units mobilized earlier this year and will deploy into Iraq at the end of this year and into early 2005.

Rainbow Division units mobilizing for Operation Iraqi Freedom include the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters Company, the Aviation and Engineer Brigade Headquarters, the Division Artillery Headquarters, Division Support Command Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 150th General Aviation Support Battalion, 50th Main Support Battalion, 642nd Division Aviation Support Battalion, 250th Signal Battalion, 642nd Military Intelligence Battalion, 42nd Military Police Company, 272nd Chemical Company, 42nd Division Band, Battery E (Target Acquisition), 101st Field Artillery, 42nd Rear Operations Cell and 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment.

The Rainbow Team becomes a Task Force.

The mobilization of the Rainbow Division provides a foundation on which the Army can build a combat task force for operations in Iraq. Division Soldiers will provide the command and control, logistics and operational base for combat brigades to succeed in their mission in Iraq.

The combat force, known as Task Force Liberty, includes the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team from Fort Stewart, Georgia and 3rd Brigade Combat Team from Fort Benning, Georgia. The Idaho National Guard provides the 116th Brigade Combat Team and the 278th Regimental Combat Team from the Tennessee Army National Guard complete the force.

The entire team is part of the Army's design for employing smaller, modular units for mobilization and deployment. The concept provides "plug and play," capabilities-based forces, capable of seamlessly integrating with other Army formations in joint and combined operations.

The division task force represents Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve organizations from more than 24 states and American Samoa. Task Force Liberty stretches from coast to coast and across all Army components.

Equipping the Rainbow Team.

Soldiers from Task Force Liberty will be packing and shipping some of the most recent Army items available to Soldiers in the field. Troops have completed weapons training with new automatic rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers. Vehicle training with the Army's Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTVs) give task force Soldiers enhanced logistics haul

capabilities. Soldiers deploying to Iraq have received Interceptor Body Armor and Army Rapid Fielding Initiative (RFI) items such as the Improved Hot Weather Desert Boot.

Training the Rainbow Team.

Task Force Liberty commanders and their staffs came together at Fort Drum this month for the division's mission readiness exercise, the unit's culminating training event for Iraq. Soldiers and their leaders participated in the exercise at the Fort Drum Battle Simulation Center where the staff and commanders underwent a demanding and strenuous command post exercise.

Each unit and staff section worked through their respective tasks and focused on dealing with hundreds of incidents and scenarios that Task Force Liberty expects to encounter in Iraq – everything from roadside bombs and supply issues to building schools and repairing water and sanitation facilities – all to help the emerging representative government of Iraq prosper.

“(This training) really breaks down the National Guard, Reserve and active duty barriers,” said Col. Mark McKnight, the 1st Brigade Combat Team Commander, 3rd Infantry Division. “We’re all one division here at this exercise, just like we’ll be one division when we get to Iraq.

The ten-day training was supervised by the Army's Battle Command Training Program, the Fort Leavenworth-based training center for division and corps commanders and their staffs.

“Our training program is not over at all,” said Maj. Gen. Taluto at the conclusion of the mission readiness exercise. “We all know that we will continue to train all the way in. We can not be ready enough.

“We owe it to the Soldiers we lead,” Taluto said.

The Way to Kuwait and Iraq.

Without breaking stride, Soldiers of the 42nd Infantry Division began preparing for shipment of equipment the day following their successful mission readiness exercise. Vehicles and equipment destined for overseas shipment were packed and loaded onto rail cars at Fort Drum or prepared for convoy movement from Fort Dix to the City of Philadelphia where the Army will upload equipment for sealift.

“This is the first time since WWII that the division, in its entirety, is rolling,” said Maj. Edward Walther, the officer in charge of railhead loading at Fort Drum on the first day of the operation.

Once at the port, division equipment will be consolidated with the aircraft from the 42nd Aviation Brigade and stowed aboard ships bound for Kuwait. The helicopters will be partially disassembled and shrink-wrapped for the nearly month-long voyage.

“This is another step towards deployment,” Walther said. “We trained with our equipment and now our equipment is being shipped. We’ll marry up with our equipment in Kuwait and then move forward into Iraq,” he said.

‘This is ours to do.’

As the division prepares for movement, the 42nd Division will host families for deployment ceremonies at both Fort Drum and Fort Dix on October 8th and 9th, respectively. The ceremonies will celebrate the successful completion of unit training and will herald the donning of the desert camouflage uniforms for the 42nd Infantry Division Soldiers.

“The training that we received, building this team, has been a total Army effort and the Army has treated us well, entirely first class,” said Maj. Gen. Taluto. “But in the days, weeks and months ahead we must all remember that the mission in Iraq is ours to do.”

RAINBOW,...NEVER FORGET!